

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 10743 161238Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 PM-05 L-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 ICAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 /051 W
-----111947 161240Z /53

O 160617Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1713
INFO USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE
CINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
JCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
DA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SECNAV WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SECAF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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CORRECTED COPY (MRN 10743 VICE 743)

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, UR, US
SUBJECT: US-SOVIET MILITARY EXCHANGES
REF: (A) STATE 103918; (B) MOSCOW 05344

1. PRIOR TO AND AFTER RECEIPT OF REFTEL, DAO PRESSED THE FOREIGN LIAISON SECTION, MOD, FOR AN ANSWER ON THE MILITARY LECTURE EXCHANGE PROGRAM. EACH INQUIRE WAS FENCED AND PARRYED WITH A SOVIET REQUEST FOR A RESPONSE TO THEIR SUGGESTION FOR A SENIOR OFFICER EXCHANGE.

2. AFTER SEVERAL DELAYS AND POSTPONEMENTS, ALLEGEDLY DUE TO THE HOLIDAYS ON 1,2, 8 AND 9 MAY, DAO SECURED AN APPOINTMENT ESPECIALLY TO ADDRESS THE MILITARY LECTURE EXCHANGE PROPOSALS. THE SUBSTANCE OF REFTEL WAS AGAIN PRESENTED. SOVIET RESPONSE, ATTRIBUTED BY UVS TO "HIGHER AUTHORITY," WAS THAT:
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- A. LECTURE EXCHANGE PROGRAM WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE THIS YEAR.
- B. LECTURE PROGRAM IS A GOOD ONE BUT BOTH SIDES SHOULD NOW TRY SOMETHING THAT HAS A WIDER VALUE SUCH AS THE SENIOR EXCHANGE SUGGESTED BY THE SOVIET UNION.
- C. LECTURE PROGRAM COULD TAKE PLACE IN FUTURE YEARS.

3. WE SEEM TO HAVE REACHED AN IMPASSE WITH THE SOVIETS ON

THIS ISSUE, AS THEY CLEARLY WANT A POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM US ON THEIR PROPOSAL BEFORE MOVING ON OURS. IT WAS, IN PART, TO AVOID SUCH A SITUATION FROM ARISING THAT THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDED LAST MARCH THAT WE DEAL WITH THE VARIOUS PROPOSALS AS A KIND OF "PACKAGE." WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN DRAGGING THEIR FEET THIS YEAR AND HAVE SHOWN LITTLE INTEREST IN ACCOMMODATING U.S. DESIRES, PARTICULARLY ON THE QUESTION OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY VISIT. HOWEVER, THEY DID RESPOND MORE POSITIVELY LAST YEAR AND BOTH THE NDU AND LECTURE EXCHANGES TOOK PLACE.

4. IN MARCH, WE TOLD THE SOVIETS THAT WE WOULD DECIDE ON THEIR PROPOSAL AFTER RECEIVING A RESPONSE TO OUR PROPOSED NDU EXCHANGE (REF B). UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES AND IN THE INTERESTS OF BREAKING THE LOG JAM ON THIS ISSUE, WE PROPOSE THAT OUR RESPONSE TO THE SOVIET PROPOSAL BE SUBSTANTIALLY AS FOLLOWS:

A. THE U.S. SEES CONSIDERABLE MERIT IN THE SOVIET PROPOSAL TO EXCHANGE SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS IN 1978 AND 1979;

B. THE U.S. BELIEVES THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT CAN BEST BE SERVED BY NORMALIZING LOW-LEVEL SUCCESSFUL EXCHANGES, SUCH AS THE NDU EXCHANGE AND THE MILITARY GUEST LECTURER EXCHANGE PROGRAM;

C. THE U.S. WILL CONSIDER THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR AN
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EXCHANGE OF SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS IN 1978 ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE SOVIETS ACCEPT OUR PROPOSAL FOR AN EXCHANGE OF MILITARY GUEST LECTURERS ALSO IN 1978.
D. SHOULD THESE BE SUCCESSFUL, WE WOULD WISH TO CONTINUE THEM IN 1979.

5. DEPARTMENT WILL NOTICE THAT, AGAIN, WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO "PACKAGE" THE PROPOSED EXCHANGES SO THAT THE SOVIET "INITIATIVE" GETS DEALT WITH AT THE SAME TIME AS OUR OWN. WE BELIEVE THAT AFTER THEIR POSITIVE RESPONSE LAST YEAR, WE WILL HAVE TO GIVE THEM A POSITIVE REPLY TO THEIR SUGGESTION IF WE ARE TO CONTINUE THE EXCHANGE. IT IS PROBABLY AS IMPORTANT TO THE SOVIETS IN THE CSCE CONTEXT THAT NOT ONLY THE EXCHANGES BE BALANCED, BUT THAT THE "INITIATIVES" BE BALANCED AS WELL. GIVEN THAT WE HAVE NOW BEEN INFORMED THAT A "HIGHER AUTHORITY" HAS TURNED DOWN THE LECTURER EXCHANGE FOR THIS YEAR, WE ARE NOT SANGUINE THAT THAT DECISION CAN BE REVERSED. NONETHELESS WE THINK IT IS WORTH THE TRY. SHOULD THE SOVIETS REFUSE, WE WILL HAVE TO RECONSIDER WHETHER WE THINK THE SENIOR OFFICER EXCHANGE SHOULD CONTINUE FOR THIS YEAR. A POSSIBLE FALLBACK WHICH WE CAN CONSIDER IS TO LET THE

LECTURER EXCHANGE SLIP UNTIL JUST BEYOND THE NEW YEAR
BUT INSIST THAT IT PROCEED BEFORE THE SECOND SENIOR
OFFICER EXCHANGE CAN TAKE PLACE. IN THIS WAY WE COULD
BE FAIRLY SURE THAT IT WOULD TAKE PLACE IN THE 1978-79
ACADEMIC YEAR.

6. SINCE THE SOVIET PROPOSAL INVOLVES A JULY VISIT BY
U.S. SENIOR OFFICERS, WE REQUEST AN EXPEDITIOUS REPLY.
WE WILL BE SEEING SOVIET OFFICIALS AT ARMED FORCES DAY
RECEPTION MAY 16 AND IT WILL BE VERY HELPFUL TO
HAVE RESPONSE BY THAT TIME, IF POSSIBLE. TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INFORMATION EXCHANGE, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, MILITARY PLANS, MILITARY VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW10743
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780206-0514
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780554/aaaabtwi.tel
Line Count: 126
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5449c19c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 103918, 78 MOSCOW 5344
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 16 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2678980
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US-SOVIET MILITARY EXCHANGES
TAGS: MPOL, UR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5449c19c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014